

Message Text

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TAGS:

SUBJECT: AMERICAN PRESENCE AT BERLIN BIENNALE

REF: BERLIN 5250

1. THE TEN-DAY CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVAL IN EAST BERLIN KNOWN AS THE MUSIC BIENNALE ENDED ON FEBRUARY 27 AFTER A VARIETY OF CONCERTS AND RECITALS FEATURING PRIMARILY GDR AND USSR ARTISTS AND GROUPS. THREE DAYS PRIOR TO FESTIVAL'S END, AMERICAN PARTICIPANT GUNDARIS PONE PHONED PAO AND MEETING ARRANGED. WHEN ASKED WHY HE WAITED SO LONG TO MAKE CONTACT, PONE SAID CU TURNED DOWN HIS REQUEST TO FUND TRIP GAVE HIM IMPRESSION NO OFFICIAL INTEREST. ONCE DISABUSED THIS IDEA, AND LOST OPPORTUNITY FOR PAO TO EXPLOIT PONE'S PRESENCE CONVEYED TO HIM, PONE EXPRESSED DISMAY HIS OWN SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS AND PROCEEDED DESCRIBE HIS ACTIVITIES, GDR ATTITUDE HIS PARTICIPATION, AND GENESIS OF INVITATION.

2. SOMETIME IN RECENT PAST, PNE, WHO IS PROFESSOR OF COMPOSITION AT SUNY NEW PALTZ AND CONDUCTOR OF CONTEMPORARY
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CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (CCO), DECIDED INTRODUCE NEW WORK BY GDR LATE COMPOSER HANNS EISLER AND THEREBY MADE CONTACT WITH SONJA ELM, GDR EMBASSY CULTURAL ATTACHE, WHO ATTENDED CONCERT. WHEN BIENNALE WAS ANNOUNCED, ELM EXTENDED INVITATION TO PONE, WITH ONLY BERLIN EXPENSES COVERED. PONE WROTE THEN SECRETARY KISSINGER REQUESTING TRAVEL EXPENSES, WHICH CU DECOINED, PONE THEN DECIDING COME AT OWN EXPENSE.

3. SINCE HIS ARRIVAL, NO ATTEMPT MADE BY BIENNALE COMMITTEE PROGRAM PONE. HIS STATUS THROUGHOUT FESTIVAL WAS NO MORE OR LESS THAN THAT OF CONCERTGOER, WHICH EXASPERATED HIM TO POINT OF SEEKING APPOINTMENT WITH FIRST SECRETARY OF GDR COMPOSERS UNION LESSER. AFTER 45-MINUTE WAIT OUTSIDE LESSER'S OFFICE, WHEREIN THROUGH OPEN DOOR PONE OBSERVED LESSER OCCUPIED WITH SEEMINGLY MINOR MATTERS, PNE AROSE TO LEAVE WHEREUPON LESSER CAME OUT GREETED HIM AND THEN SPENT TWO HOURS DISCUSSING CULTURAL EXCHANGES. LESSER EXPLAINED THAT GDR VERY INTERESTED IN MUSICAL EXCHANGES AND WOULD BE WILLING CONSIDER PONE'S CCO FOR CONCERTS LATER THIS YEAR. FUNDING POSED AS MAJOR PROBLEM. PONE WAS UNDERSTANDABLY IRKED THAT NO INTEREST SHOWN IN HIS MUSIC.

4. PONE ASKED FOR AND RECEIVED FROM PAO RUNDOWN ON STATUS US-GDR CULTURAL RELATIONS AND GUIDANCE IF TALKS PRUSUED BY GDR. ON FINAL DAY, PONE CONTACTED BY GUSTAV WALTZINGER, OFFICIAL OF GDR ARTISTS GUREAU, AND ENCOURAGED ASSIST IN PROGRAMMING GDR ORCHESTRA CONDUCTORS IN US. PONE REPORTED THAT ALTHOUGH WALTZINGER SPOKE WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF CONDUCTOR EXCAHNGE, HIS EMPHASIS CENTERED ON GETTING GDR CONDUCTORS TO U.S. PROMPTING PONE TO COMMENT - "OBVIOUSLY, WE ARE THE GDR'S PRIME TARGET FOR CULTURAL ACTIVITY."

5. COMMENT: PONE WAS BORN IN RIGA, RECEIVED PH.D. AT UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, HAS CONDUCTED IN EUROPE, INCLUDING IN THE SOVIET UNION, WHERE HE PERFORMED AS CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER IN 1972 IN LATVIA. ONCE HE WAS CONVINCED THAT BOTH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE EMBASSY SUPPORTED HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BIENNALE, HE MADE HIMSELF AVAILABLE "FOR WHATEVER FUTURE PURPOSES MY COUNTRY NEEDS ME." HE ASKED FOR GUIDANCE IN THE EVENT THE GDR PRESS INTERVIEWED HIM AND WAS TOLD WHAT TO AVOID, BUT IN A FAREWELL PHONE CALL, HE MADE NO FURTHER MENTION OF THE INTERVIEW. ALTHOUGH SEEMING NOT TO BE POLITICALLY NAIVE, HE MAY NOT BE POLITICALLY VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE. WHEN ASKED WHAT THE MOTIVATION HAD BEEN FOR MIN IN COMPOSING A LARGE CHORAL WORK, INCLUDING FOUR SPEAKERS, SIX YEARS AGO, ON A TEXT BY ROSA LUXEMBOURG, AS WELL AS HIS CURRENT WORK IN PROGRESS, AN OPERA ENTITLED "ROSA LUXEMBOURG," PONE SAID HIS INTEREST IN THE GERMAN COMMUNIST WAS PURELY HUMANITARIAN, AND THAT HE HAD NOT KNOWN UNTIL NOW, UPON HIS FIRST VISIT TO EAST BERLIN, THAT LUXEMBOURG WAS A NATIONALLY CELEBRATED FIGURE AFTER WHOM STREETS AND SQUARES WERE NAMED. POLANSKY

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